

2003 Idaho Rural Summit

The 2003 Idaho Rural Summit was sponsored by the Idaho Rural Partnership and attended by almost 200 people with an interest in rural issues. The attendees represented all the geographic areas in the State and were a diverse mix of private industry, economic development specialists as well as officials from local, State, Federal and Tribal government.

The 2003 Idaho Rural Summit agenda was organized around the significant issues and major recommendations contained in the September 2000 report from Governor Kempthorne's Rural Development Task Force. The five significant issues from the Governor's 2000 Task Force were Leadership/Governance, Telecommunications, Education and Workforce Training, Infrastructure Development and Economic Development.

In Breakout Sessions, Idaho Rural Summit participants heard reports on progress in each of the areas from state and federal leaders and then brainstormed goals and action items. Participants in each Breakout Session chose their top ideas to place on a priority-setting ballot that the entire group completed during the closing session of the 2003 Idaho Rural Summit.

The Idaho Rural Partnership will work closely with interested individuals, organizations and agencies to follow up on the recommendations from the November 18-19, 2003 Idaho Rural Summit.



LaMoyne Hyde, Ray Burstedt and Stan Davis (L-R) participate in the Economic Development breakout session at the 2003 Idaho Rural Summit.

The top priority goals and action items from the 2003 Idaho Rural Summit are listed below by topic. It is the intent of the Idaho Rural Partnership that action will be well underway, and in most cases completed, prior to the next Idaho Rural Summit.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal – Increase return on investment of rural economic development activities through cooperation and collaboration.

Action Items –

- Provide educational information to local communities, and their leaders, about the potential benefits and costs of economic development. Include business retention and expansion tools to maximize existing efforts and resources.

- Engage higher education more fully in rural economic development. Specifically, involve University of Idaho extension personnel with local economic development efforts.
- Expand definition of economic development success to include qualitative measures in addition to the number of jobs created.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Goal – Increase options, access and strategies for post-secondary education for rural Idahoans.

Action Items –

- Expand offerings and maintain a consistent training program for self-employed individuals and others with an entrepreneurial interest. Specifically, consider changes to the existing Workforce Development Training Fund or creation of something similar to fund these efforts.
- Develop the capacity of the higher education system to understand specific industry needs and to offer quick response trainings.
- Improve and promote professional technical programs and certifications.
- Bring the six community colleges together to work as a collaborative system.
- Utilize existing public school facilities as community learning centers and offer additional adult education classes.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal - Educate communities about funding sources and how to access them.

Action Item –

- Create and maintain a central website that includes summary information and links for detailed information about infrastructure funding.

LEADERSHIP

Goal – Recruit, train and support leaders for Idaho's rural communities.

Action Items –

- Identify and promote existing leadership programs that are affordable, accessible and effective.
- Encourage training that includes communication, conflict resolution, decision-making, etc.
- Compile and distribute 'Leadership Packets' that include 'how to' materials for use on a local level by individual leaders.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Goal – Increase broadband access at a reasonable price across rural Idaho.

Action Items -

- Deploy wireless technology in rural communities.
- Create and encourage rural cooperatives that offer telecommunications/internet service/wireless technology services.

For more information, please feel free to contact us!

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